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the Third Millennium B.C. while admitting the possibility of the later date of the Second Millennium B.C. suggested by other authorities. Rostovtseff sees this Caucasian culture as original and native, influenced only slightly by, and not derived from, other contemporary cultures of the Near and Middle East.[1]

The Argonautic legend, which really embodies the form of an early "Black Sea Pilot" handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, and modified and embroidered according to the fluctuations of geographical knowledge and the fertile imagination of all sailors, relates to the history of a maritime commerce in the Black Sea, dating back to round about the fifteenth century B.C., eight hundred years before the great days of the Hellenic mercantile marine, and several hundred years before the Aryan nomads and pirates overturned the flourishing monarchies and the great sea-trading cities of the Bronze Age. The buried bones and wealth of metal things found in the Kuban, and the carved stones set along the cliffs of the Abkhazian coast illuminate this epic monument of Orpheus, and the maritime smack of all the scattered evidence seems to indicate that the prehistoric civilization of the Caucasus, if indeed native and original, was in familiar and enduring contact with one or the other, or all, of the succeeding thalassocracies of the Bronze Age. The Kingdom of Æa—whose riches amazed the rough crew of Jason's ship, as in a later age the treasures of Mexico astonished Cortez' sailors—may indeed have been very similar in character to the Bosporan kingdom which, twelve centuries later, rose to great prosperity on the north-east coasts of the Black Sea; that is, a country of farming and mining, ruled by a native dynasty in regular contact with sea-traders who had opened up the navigation of the Black Sea. And in the way that the Bosporan kingdom grew to wealth and political importance as the warden of the ways to Central Asia by the Don and Ural and as the garnerer of all the products round about, so the kingdom of Æa, master of the mines and natural products of the Trans-Caucasian Trough, straddled the through-route to the Caspian and Iran and the ways that went south-east to Lake Van and the Mesopotamian Plain.

[1] For Rostovtseff's views on the relation of the Caucasus to the civilizations of the Bronze Age, see particularly *R.A.* (1920), *L'Âge de cuivre dans le Caucase Septentrional et les civilisations de Soumer et de l'Egypt protodynastique*; his book, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, Introduction and Chap. I, "The Prehistoric Civilizations"; *J.H.S.* (1920), *The Treasure of Astarabad*; see also his recent book *Animal Style in South Russia and China* (1929) for qualification of his earlier views. See also Note A, p. 366.

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361 brave and laughing, like as it were to some free woman who has known so many grasping dirty masters, and remains fresh in all her shame.

• 172 [103] Farther down the river below the conflux of the Rioni and the Qwirila, lay in the Classic time Rhodopolis[1]; it is Vardistzikhe of the Georgians, in literal translation "the castle of the rose". Situated on low ground among the woods, it became a favourite winter residence of the Lazic and Imerian kings. Men dealt badly by it; the natives razed their rose castle in the Lazic War (A.D. 549) to prevent its seizure by the Persians; about twelve centuries later the Russians smashed the ageing walls of the Imerian foundation, "*afin d'empêcher les Turcs d'y prendre position*".[2] And thus when Dubois visited the site, about a hundred years back, he found that nothing rested but a strong wall of seven or eight feet in thickness, of which a part dated, perhaps, from the time of the Lazes, for it was in their style of architecture.[3] Lower down, again, in the angle of the conflux of the Tskhenis-tsqali with the Rioni, was the "plain of oaks" Mukherisi,[4] dominated by a fortress of the name, a hold much contested in the Lazic War. And higher up the Tskhenis-tsqali was Onurgurisi, Khoni[5] of later days, commanding the way up into the mountains to the Svanian country. Many more were the sea-ports, towns and castles of the Colchian-Lazic basin, from Bathys, "the deep anchorage",[6] near the mouth of the Chorokhi and Phasis at the mouth of the Rioni,[7] round the crescent up to Dioscurias; inland to Petra,[8] a Roman stronghold under the Gurian hills, and to Alexandria,[9] which twin-marcher fort with Sarapana[10] guarded the way over the mountains from Iberia.

[103] But there was one place in all this country so much older than the others in tradition that the Greeks distinguished it as Archæopolis—"the ancient city"—and the Georgians, through the long years to this present day, have named the site of it Nakalakevi, which has the meaning of "where there was once a town". In Wakhushti's time, Nakalakevi was an obscure Mingrelian borough, a residence of the Dadianis,

[1] Procopius, VIII, xiii. 22. [2] Dubois, II, 221. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] Mocheris of Procopius, who calls it and Rhodopolis "two cities of the greatest importance".

[5] Dubois, I, 407.

[6] Now Batum (Georgian—Batomi).

[7] Phasis—the medieval Passo—now Poti. The lower course of the Rioni was called also Phasis by the Classic writers.

[8] Dubois, III, 86, located the site of Petra by the village of Ujarat.

[9] Dubois, II, 72, and Wakhushti, p. 363, use the medieval Georgian name Skanda.

[10] Shoropani.

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172 situated on the right bank of the Tekhuri, a small stream which falls into the Rioni, some miles below the Tskhenistsqali. Wakhushti describes it as "a town and fortress built by Kuji in the time of the first King Farnavazi". Kuji was the ruler of Egrissi, the old Georgian name for all the western plain. Wakhushti adds that Nakalakevi was destroyed during the Arab wars, "became a town again and was ravaged".[1] Dubois, who visited the ruins of Nakalakevi, decided that in great detail they answered to the description of Archæopolis of the Lazes, written by Procopius. He found the ruins of a bridge over the Tekhuri, a castle or acropolis, and a great walled area inside which were the ruins of a palace, a bazaar, and a small Christian church, in the earliest style of East Christian art.[2] Brosset also visited the site and accepted the identity of Nakalakevi with Archæopolis.[3]

The special antiquity of the town is patent in both the Georgian and the Greek nomenclature. In the Georgian Annals, the legend of its foundation dates to the first days of the Georgian monarchy. And it may well be that "the old city" of Procopius was the successor of Æa, the capital of the mythical kingdom of Aietes, where the Argonauts came. In fact the sparse indications as to the whereabouts of Æa given by Strabo, by Pliny and by Stephanos of Byzantium, all indicate that Archæopolis, the Lazian capital, and Nakalakevi, the obscure Mingrelian borough of the Middle Ages, rose the one upon the other, upon the site of Æa.[4]

We have already observed that the country eastward of the mountains of Likhi lay, generally, beyond the borderland of Greek knowledge. The mountains which encircled and frowned down upon the enchanted land of Colchis gave no inspiration to the mythological fantasies of the early Greeks. Even to the later geographers, the up-country valleys were remote lands ruled by bucolic heathen kings.

It is not until we come to the great work of the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus,[5] in the tenth century A.D., that we find a western geographer really familiar with the topography of hither Georgia. Nevertheless, the culture of these parts was venerable. Urartian place-names may be traced along the valley of the Araks,[6] and north to the Chorokhi

[1] Wakhushti, pp. 396–7. Nakalakevi was called also Tzikhé-Godja (? "Kuji's castle").
[2] Dubois, III, 51 *et seq.*
[3] Brosset, *Voyage Archéologique*, 7e Rapp., p. 60; 9e Rapp., pp. 22 *et seq.*
[4] For discussion of this question see Dubois, *ibid.*
[5] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperii.*
[6] Meshchaninov, *Iz. Gos. AK. I.M.K., Geograficheskiya nazvaniya urartskoy po Khaldiskim nadpisyam*, IV (1925), 43–64.

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172 valley. Carved lions, as yet unstudied, among the boulders of the Chorokhi and the Tortomis-tsqali confirm the declaration of the place-names. Some kind of not uncultured life went on continuing from the Bronze Age right through the centuries which saw Trebizond and Phasis grow to rich emporia for the trade of all these parts. The Georgian Annals embody the tradition of the most ancient foundation of many settled sites; in describing the legendary invasion of Georgia by Alexander, the Annalists give a picture of the country still suffering from the devastation of the Swarming Time, and they adjoin a list of the settled sites which were then flourishing.

> "He saw horribly barbarous nations, established on the Mtkvari and along its tributaries, nations which we call Bunturki ('primitive Turks') and Kipchaks; he was astonished for no people acted as they did. He found also in the middle of Georgia, the strong towns of Tsunda; of Khertvisi on the Mtkvari, of Odzrakhé perched on a rock of Ghado; of Tukharisi, on the river of Sper or Chorokhi; of Urbnisi, of Kaspi, of Uplistzikhé; great Mtzkheta and its suburbs; Sarkiné, Tzikhé-didi; Zanavi where the Jews lived; Rustavi; Dédatzikhé, Samshwildé, Mtkvaris-tzikhé or Khunani, and the towns of Kakheti; all towns and citadels defended by a population of intrepid warriors." [1]

The character of these settled sites must have been varied. We are familiar with Strabo's account of the towns of the Mtkvari plain—

> "where the houses have roofs covered with tiles and display skill in building; there are market-places in these and various kinds of public edifices".

172 Such were the towns in the open plain of the Mtkvari. But
361 the most characteristic and original features of Georgian domestic architecture had always been the use which the people have made of the innumerable natural caves along the banks of the narrow river-valleys of upland Georgia. These sites have been occupied from time immemorial, and mention is made of them, almost from page to page, in the Georgian Annals. Wakhushti, in his *Geographical Description of Georgia*, mentions by name over one hundred and twenty sites of such cave-dwelling communities, which in his day in the middle of the eighteenth century were still either continuously inhabited, or resorted to as places of refuge by the people during the frequent slave-raiding expeditions of the Turks of

[1] Brosset, *H. de la G.*, I, 33. Ghado is an ancient name for a part of the Mountains of Likhi.

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Akhaltzikhé.[1] To this present day, many villages, particularly in the mountainous country of the upper Mtkvari, consist of hovels, hollowed partly out of the rocks and made habitable by a wall of stone and plaster on one or two sides. To so great an extent was the use of rock-dwellings a part of the domestic economy of the Georgians, that more than one of these trogoldytic sites grew to the dimensions of a town, and to the significance of a royal residence. Uplistzikhé you may see soon after the train leaves Gori for Tiflis. "The castle of Uplos" is carved out of a long low ridge of rock, which overlooks the wide valley of the Mtkvari. Here, cut out of the natural caves of the ancient mountain, is a great hall of audience, baths and reservoirs, a church, and numerous lesser dwellings, covered passage ways, and a secret way down to the water of the river. The style of architecture of the great hall of audience and the church indicate that certainly as late as the twelfth century it was restored and prepared for the reception of a new master. More inaccessible and less ancient is the cave-town of Vardzia which lies up in the mountains, a few miles west of Khertvisi on the main road from Akhaltzikhé to Akhalkalaki. Vardzia—the rose-fortress—was a town of unascertained antiquity. Its royal palace and its church were, according to the Annals and to Wakhushti, begun by King Giorgi III and completed by Queen Tamara.

The settled sites of early Georgia consisted, therefore, of towns and villages of wood-tiled houses in the open Mtkvari plain, and—where the mountain side offered a worn flank—of rough troglodytic dwellings, which, as at Uplistzikhé and Vardzia, grew to the rank of royal towns.

In the upper valley of the Mtkvari and in the valley of the Chorokhi, the people have for the most part lived always a half-nomadic life, packed in the winter into troglodytic hovels among the boulders along the narrow valleys of the rivers; moving in summer to camp over the lush highland pastures. Such to-day is the habit of the Tatars of the eastern Caucasus, nomads by race, who move their quarters from the Mughan plain in winter to the mountains of Karabagh in the summer

[1] In the summer of 1926, I found many of the inhabitants of Gori, a comparatively large town on the Trans-Caucasian Railway, living in troglodytic conditions, as the result of the destruction of their houses by an earthquake. Xenophon, IV, v., 25, has left a description of life in these troglodytic dwellings. "Their houses were underground, the entrance like the mouth of a well, but spacious below: there were passages dug into them for the cattle, but the people descended by ladders. In the houses were goats, sheep, cows and fowls with their young; all the cattle were kept on fodder within the walls. There was also wheat, barley, leguminous vegetables and barley-wine in large bowls."

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361 166 months; and of the Kurds all over the upland country from Van to Ardahani. Such also is the habit of the Georgian-speaking Ajars, who in the summer move up from the hot valleys to the alpine meadows of Karchkhali and Shavsheti;[1] and of the people of the right bank of the Mtkvari in its upper course, and of its smaller tributaries, which fall north from the Trialetian mountains into the middle valley. And the people of the valleys of the Ktzia-Khrami and Berduji move their herds in summer to the highland lakes, to Panavari—"the lake of butterflies", and to Saghamo—"the evening lake", called Tuman Göl, "the mist lake", by the Turks.[2]

This half-migratory habit of the people of the upland country can explain the lack of topographical detail of the early Greek geographers, and their exaggerated ideas of the barbarous character of the inhabitants thereabouts.[3]

133 172 The westward limits of the Georgian-speaking country, and the limit also of that country which is regarded as Georgian by the authors of the Georgian Annals, is indicated roughly by the line of the great trunk-road from Trebizond to Erzerum. The southern limit of the Georgian country on this side were the mountains overhanging the valley of the Araks from the north. This country is in the shape of a foreshortened arm, extending westward from the twin-body of the Rioni-Mtkvari basin. The long narrow valley of the Chorokhi, running west to east, divides the mountain country into two. The mountains to the north of the Chorokhi are the country of the Lazes or Chans (La-zan), Chaneti of the Georgian Annals.[4] The Laz communes cling to the narrow foreshore of the sea, and are scattered along the sides of the short narrow valleys falling steeply from the high mountains. Their settlements are communes rather than villages, as in the Ajar country,

[1] See *Zap. Kav. Ot. I.R.G.O.*, X, Part I, D. Kazbegi, *Tri mesyatz v' Turetskoi Gruzii*, for an account of the nomadizing of the Ajars.

[2] Wakhushti remarks curiously about Lake Parnavari to this effect, about the summer migration of the kine: "Lake Parnavari is very large and full of fish which are not very savoury. Since in summer, great numbers of sheep, of horses, of cattle and beasts from Kartli and Kakheti are stationed round about, and since their excrement is washed down to the lake by the melting of the snows, they say that this is the cause of the bad taste of the fish."—Wakhushti, *D.G.*, p. 163.

[3] Procopius, in the sixth century A.D., says: "The mountains of the Meskhoi are not rough or unproductive of crops, but they abound in all good things, since the Meskhoi, for their part, are skilful farmers, and there are actually vineyards in their country. However, this land is hemmed in by mountains which are very lofty and covered by forests, so that they are exceedingly difficult to pass through."—*History of the Wars*, VIII, ii., 25, 26.

[4] The name Lazistan is Turkish. The Greeks called the country Lazica, including under this form also Mingrelia. La- is a Svanian territorial prefix, and the Svanians call Mingrelia, as well as Lazistan—Lazan—the land of the *Zan*←→*Chan*←→*San*←→*Svan* (cf. Procopius, I, xv, 21, who speaks of the Tzani or Sani).

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in Abkhazeti and Cherkezeti—in fact, as it is all along the mountain parts of the eastern coast of the Black Sea. The houses in these communes are wooden chalets—one-floor shanties standing above the ground on piles and scattered at a fair distance from each other, and each among its own grove of trees. Dubois has explained how the Abkhaz and the Circassian sought always a solitary emplacement for his dwelling, and chose his situation near a wood into which, at any sign of danger, his family might flee. The way of life of the Laz is similar, as Strabo exemplified in his account of the Mossynoeci, "*who attack travellers, leaping down from the floors of their dwellings among the trees*".[1] The Lazes were always clever wood-workers and boat-builders,[2] lumbermen, fishermen[3] and pirates; their mountains were impassable, and their allegiance went to the master of the sea-coast between Trebizond and Phasis, in the degree to which repression could be brought to bear upon their coastal communes.[4]

Along the coast of the Channi or Laz, where the fertile river valleys come down to the sea between the mountain bluffs covered with rhododendron and azalea, there have been from remote antiquity sites which were at once roadsteads and beach-markets rather than towns. The classic writers call these places Greek foundations, but the names are Laz; and it would seem that the Greeks in developing their Euxine trade, settled here, along the Lazian coast on older native sites, as Rostovtseff has shown they did in Colchis and round the north-east shore of the Euxine to the Cimmerian Bosporus. The place-names of the greater classic ports along the southern littoral of the Euxine are not indeed of Greek origin; they are rather Greek mouthings of older native names, which later received a definitely Hellenic form, and had attached to them some legendary explanation of the word. In the time of Xenophon the Greek population of the Pontine littoral was more sparsely scattered than in later times when Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy wrote of it. From Samsun, eastward by Sinope and Kerasund, Greek influence thinned to its ultimate bulkhead at Trebizond. Immediately east of Trebizond there were Greek depots established at Susurmena (Surmena) and

[1] Strabo, XII, iii., 18.
[2] Xenophon, *Anabasis*, V, iv, 11; Wakhushti, pp. 110–11.
[3] Strabo, *ibid.*
[4] The Lazes were as dangerous to the troops of the Byzantine emperors and the Georgian kings as they were to the cohorts of Pompey (cf. Strabo, *ibid.*). The Turkish Government by savage measures suppressed, during the forties of the last century, the virtual independence which they had always enjoyed. (See Kazbegi, *Tri mesyatsa v' Turetskoi Gruzii*, for an account of this campaign.)

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Rhizæum (Riza), but they were only trading centres and the people of the district were actually of Laz stock. Even in Trebizond in the Middle Ages, the Laz element in the population appears to have been numerous and powerful. Abu'l-Fida, who says that "Trebizond is a celebrated port", quotes ibn-Said as authority that "the greater part of its inhabitants are Lazgis".[1] And the feud between the "town-party" and the "country-party" which vitiated the politics of the Comnenian "empire" appears to have been a continuing contrariety between Greek and Laz.[2]

During all the classic period down to the Middle Ages, there was a flourishing trade driven along the Lazic coast. Eastward from Susurmena and Rhizæum were Athenæ, Archabis and Apsarus, in the land of "the Romans who are called Pontic".[3] Speaking of these places Procopius mentions that the Tzani (Laz) who had been fighting the Byzantine army at Petra, after passing through Rhizæum and Athenæ, "betook themselves to their homes through the territory of the Trapezuntines". Athenæ is Atina of the Laz, Archabis is Arkhave, and Apsarus appears to be Khopa.[4] Most of the names of the Greek settlements between Trebizond and the mouth of the Chorokhi may be derived from the Laz tongue: Riza is Erizeni, "the place where people (or soldiers) meet": Atina is "the place where there is shade"; Mapavri means "leafy".

The valley of the Chorokhi in its upper and middle course has always been thinly populated, for it is a lean and narrow part, hedged by bleak mountains and nourished by this fast and shallow river. The Georgians call this region Klarjeti. Only where the main trade routes run over it from the sea to the Araks valley have the settled sites risen to some small importance. Such is Baiburt on the road from Trebizond to Erzerum, and Ispir farther down the Chorokhi, which lies on the shorter but more perilous way over the mountains from Riza on the sea, to Erzerum. Baiburt has been identified doubtfully with the Gymnias, a town described by Xenophon;[5] it cannot well be a town of lesser age than Trebizond. Ispir may be the Saparda of the Cuneiform inscriptions,[6] and

[1] Abu'l-Fida, II, ii, 146.

[2] See my paper "The March-Lands of Georgia" in *J.R.G.S.*, July, 1929. Cf. also William Miller, *Trebizond: The Last Greek Empire*, in which a family bearing the clearly Laz patronymic of Tsanichites is frequently mentioned as playing an active part in Trapezuntine politics.

[3] Procopius, II, xxx, 14.

[4] Dewing in his excellent text and translation of Procopius from which I quote, identifies Apsarus, I think, incorrectly with Makriali (Makryalos).

[5] Xenophon's *Anabasis* (Hamilton's ed.), p. 326.

[6] St. Martin, *Pap. prim. du Caucase*, p. 44.

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upon the wreckage of the Hittite empire; and by the kingdom of Urartu, around Lake Van, whose people assimilating something of the civil ways and notions of the Babylonians and the Hittites, carried these things as far as the Araks. At the end of the seventh century B.C., Urartu and Asshur, Nineveh and Babylon, went down in the turbulence and devastations of new wars. The old world was fading out; the Classic world was drifting into written light.

That the Caucasus lay within the area of the old Bronze Age civilization—which was spread, a series of connected cultures, from Northern Africa to North-western India and Turkestan—is certain, although in the present state of knowledge conclusions can be little more than reasonable hypotheses based upon the application of the slender evidence of myths and isolated archæological discoveries to the probabilities of history.

Vague knowledge of the abundance of copper in the Caucasus, associated with the Promethian myth and with the identification of the Biblical Tubal and Meshech with Uplos and Mtzkhetos, two of the eponymous heroes of the Georgians, induced earlier students of the origins of the Bronze Age to locate in the Caucasus the invention of the metallurgical arts. Dufréné went so far as to derive the Egyptian word *khespet* (tin) from Mount Kazbek,[1] while Lenormant, having scoured the whole of the prehistoric world for tin-mines accessible to the ancients, concluded that "*restent les gisements de l'Ibérie Caucasienne et ceux du Paropamisus*".[2]

The explorations of competent geologists, such as Abich, Bayern and others, having convinced historical science that tin was not found in the Caucasus, there followed a tendency rather to underestimate the significance of the Bronze Age in that region. Chantre considered that "*l'âge de bronze ne parait pas avoir atteint un grand développement au Caucase*",[3] and in this opinion Jacques de Morgan concurred.[4] But Rostovtseff, the most recent authority on the archæology of the Caucasus, now insists upon the existence in the valley of the Kuban, and probably in Trans-Caucasia, of a highly-developed Copper (and later Bronze) Age. He makes comparisons between the art of things found in the Kuban and at Koban, with the antiquities of Anau, of Sumer, of Susa and Elam, of Astarabad and of pre- and proto-dynastic Egypt. He places the full development of this Caucasian Copper civilization in

[1] Dufréné, *Etude sur l'histoire de la production et du commerce de l'étain*, Paris, 1881, p. 22.
[2] Fr. Lenormant, *Les Premières Civilisations*, Tome I, p. 128.
[3] Chantre, *Recherches Anthropologiques au Caucase*, Tome I, p. 93.
[4] De Morgan, *Mission Scientifique au Caucase*, Tome I, pp. 33 *et seq.*

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its district is the Hysperitis of Strabo. From the south many small streams fall into the Chorokhi; chief are the Tortomis-tsqali and the river of Olti. Here is the Georgian borderland, and the high pass which leads up from Erzerum to Tortomi is called in Georgian *Kartlis-Qeli*, in Turkish *Gurgi-Bughaz*—"the Georgian throat". The Georgians call this region Tao; the Armenians, Daikh. Here Xenophon's troops found themselves "*in the country of the Taokhoi, where provisions began to fail them; for the Taokhoi inhabited strong fortresses in which they had laid up all their supplies*".[1] It was in these parts towards the end of the sixth century that the family of Bagrationi, shrewd marcher-lords—playing their prospects between the kings of Armenia and Iberia, the Byzantines and the Persians—began to build the power which was to bring them later to the Armenian and Georgian thrones.

The Chorokhi, twenty-five miles above its mouth, turns north-east to the sea. At this point it receives the turbulent stream of Imer-Khevi, coming out of the mountains of Shavsheti, and a little before it has been joined by the smaller "river of Ardanuchi". The traveller might ascend the Chorokhi along its high banks to the neighbourhood of Artvini, and then ride up the precipitous valley of Ardanuchi, past the town of that name, and by Ardahani and its river to Akhaltzikhe and the Mtkvari highway into Georgia; alternately from Ardahani south to Kars and the valley of the Araks. This way by Artvini and Ardahani was only less important than the more familiar route by Trebizond and Erzerum. From the Georgian Annals the antique user of it is apparent; and if the identity of Ardahani (old Georgian Artaani) with Irdaniunis of the Urartian inscriptions be accepted, it would seem that the Khaldians and the sea-traders who had business with them, went by these mountains in the remotest times. Such, indeed, seems beyond dispute; for all the lower valley of the Chorokhi and of the Oltis-tsqali is rich in copper and lead. There are iron deposits on the left bank of the Chorokhi and gold is found near Artvini.[2] The narrow valley-ways are fertile too, and the most delicious grapes in all the Caucasus come from the little district of Ligani, between Artvini and the sea. The earlier geographers are vague about this stretch of country. Ptolemy refers to Artanisa;[3] the Georgian Annals indicate

[1] Xenophon's *Anabasis*, IV, lxxi.

[2] See *Carte Economique de la Géorgie* (Labrot, Paris), also Ghambashidze, *Mineral Resources of Trans-Caucasia*.

[3] Ptolemy, V, 10.

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the considerable antiquity of Ardahani and Artvini. Tukharisi, whose ruins Wakhushti locates near Artvini,[1] was one of the towns which by tradition, Alexander found in Georgia. During the fifth century and onwards, the Iberian kings looked with favour on this region; they began to build castles, monasteries and churches in abundance. In the seventh century, when the Muslims were in occupation of all eastern Georgia, the lower Chorokhi became the refuge and the centre of Georgian life. The monasteries of Khandzti and Opisi, near Artvini, were built during the ninth century; the fine church of Tbeti in Shavsheti and Kakhuli, near Tortomi, a few years later. The rising Georgian dynasts, the Bagrationi, Kuropalatês of Tao and Basiani, established their seat at Ardanuchi, and in the ninth century Constantine Porphyrogenitus could write that

> "The citadel of Ardanutzion is very strong, and has ramparts suitable to the capital of a district; it is the centre of all the business of Trebizond, of Iberia, of Abkhazia, of all Armenia and Syria, and it does an immense commerce with all these countries. The country or 'arzen' of Ardanutzion is large and fertile; it is the key to Iberia, Abkhazia and Meskhia."[2]

In the beginning we were quoting Wakhushti's account of the fine country where the Mtkvari takes its source. By this way we have said went the roads from the Chorokhi country into Georgia, and to the Armenian lands along the Araks. It was in the early classical days, a borderland, the "Moschic territory" of Strabo, divided between the Colchians, the Iberians and the Armenians. The Georgians called this country Zemo-Kartli, "Upper Georgia", or Samtzkhé, "the Meskhian land"; the Armenians called it Kukar; in the classical writers it is Gogarene.[3] Upper Kartli remained, until the consolidation of the Georgian monarchy in the eleventh century, a wild borderland filled with the din and skirmish of Armenian and Georgian forays. The villages were most of them troglodytic; the names of places mark only strongholds on the hills: such were the three famous fortresses of Lomsia,[4] "the lion"; Odzrakhé[5] and Juaristzikhé[6] guarding the way into Georgia by the Mtkvari defile

[1] Wakhushti, p. 115.
[2] Brosset, quoting *C. P., H. de la G., Add. et Eclair.*, p. 149.
[3] Cf. St. Martin, *Mém. sur l'Arménie*, I, 81 *et sqq.*
[4] "Lomsia", Wakhushti, p. 83, mentioned in the first century A.D.
[5] "Odzrakhé", Wakhushti, p. 87. The Annals attribute its foundation to the period of the Georgian patriarchs.
[6] Juaris-tzikhé ("the castle of the cross"), Wakhushti, p. 85.

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and the high passes of the Likhi. Khertvisi, at the junction of the river of Akhalkalaki with the Mtkvari, guarded the way up from Kars; Tsunda, an ancient hold, held the way by the small lakes over the Trialetian mountains. The very names of the large settled sites in Upper Kartli—Akhaltzikhé (the new castle) and Akhalkalaki (the new town)—indicate that the foundation of them was comparatively late. Akhaltzikhé town it seems rose round the site of Lomsia[1]; Akhalkalaki became a walled town in the eleventh century, but the foundation of a town upon the site is attributed in the Annals to the first King Farnavazi, and the name of the hill of Amiran above the town serves to confirm the tradition of the building by the Magian king.

Along the right bank of the Mtkvari lies a stretch of mountain country shaped like a mutton leg. The north-eastern part called Trialeti faces the mountains of Likhi; the curve south-westward is called Somkheti. North-eastwards the mountains decline to the wide plains of the middle reaches of the Mtkvari in which Tiflis lies; southward they face to the lake country, round the sources of the Mtkvari. These mountains are in fact a section of the peripheral rim of the Armenian plateau, linking the mountains of Likhi with the range of Shah Dagh which overhangs the lake basin of Sevan. From these mountains of Trialeti and Somkheti, a number of rivers of middle size flow eastward into the plain of the Mtkvari. The principal are the Algeti, the Ktzia, lower down called Khrami, and the Débéda (or Borchalo). The course of the last is rather north-north-east than east and it joins its waters with the Khrami a few miles before the two fall into the Mtkvari. All this country is rough and rather bare; the rivers fast and shallow, and falling to the valley of the Débéda is the hottest patch in all Georgia. Trialeti and Somkheti formed always an extension of the borderland between Armenia and Georgia. The shortest way to Tiflis, up from the Araks and the Arpa Chai lay along the Débéda, and by this way, by contrary, the Georgians might strike quickest at Kars and Ani, and the cities on the Araks. And so Trialeti and Somkheti became a land of strongholds and marcher-lords, ready to change allegiance, and they at the same time made their houses rich from the copper-mines and lead-mines, the gold[2] and porphyry and lapis-lazuli[3] of the valley of the Débéda. Here

[1] Wakhushti, p. 85: "I think that this is Lomsia, because from the time that the name of Akhaltzikhe is met with in history, Lomsia does not appear."
[2] Cf. Dubois, IV, 133–4, and 141 *et seq.* [3] Wakhushti, p. 145.

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133 there rose up in the first days of the Iberian patriarch kings Mtkvaris-tzikhé or Khunani[1] at the confluence of the Débéda with the Mtkvari; Gachiani and Arkvani[2] below the great ravine of the Khrami; and, higher up the river, Orbeti or Samshwildé,[3] the patrimony of the celebrated family of Orbeliani.

• 172 [161] It was only along the middle valley of the Mtkvari from Tashis-kari,[4] "the rock-gate", along to the confluence of the Aragvi, that Iberia equalled the Rioni basin in density of population. In contrast to the sparsely peopled mountains all around, the wide stretch of the middle Mtkvari teemed with towns and villages. Here were the oldest towns of the eastern country. Zanavi, near Tashis-kari, "where the Jews lived", caught the caravans as they emerged from the mountains. Lower down the river was Urbnisi, or *Uriat Ubani*, "the Jew's town", where St. Nino, the Evangelist, found welcome owing to her familiarity with Hebrew.[5] Farther east, below the junction of the Liakhvi with the Mtkvari was Uplistzikhé which we have described; and below the point where the small river of Rekhula falls into the Mtkvari, was the old site of Kaspi, a great town once where now only an inconsidered village bears the pregnant name. At the place where the Aragvi joins the Mtkvari was the city of Mtzkheta, and on the southern bank of the Mtkvari, in the loop of the river within a triangle formed by the small stream of Kartlis-khevi was the city of Kartli or Armazi. These two places were the most important sites in ancient Iberia. The Georgian Annalists and Wakhushti—writing in the eighteenth century—were aware of this ancient fame, but, as in the case of Caspi and Nakalakevi, no substantial attempt has ever been made to explore them by excavation and to arrive at an appreciation of the extent to which civilized life was developed there. The name of the three sites—Caspi, Kartli and Mtzkheta—imply their foundation by the tribes who settled in Georgia after the

[1] Wakhushti, p. 169. [2] *Idem*, p. 145.

[3] *Idem*, p. 167; cf. also *Sbor. Mat.*, XIII, i, pp. 3–13, S. Majnikov, *Pamyatniki drevnosti goroda Samshvilde*.

[4] The name is a Turko-Georgian combination. It is applied in the Annals to the head or the whole of the Mtkvari defile, now generally called "the defile of Borjomi" after the town of that name. Cf. Brosset, *H. de la G.*, II, 22 and note.

[5] See Brosset, *V.A.*, 6e Rapp., p. 19. The Georgian Annals record a curious tradition as to the settlement of the Jews in Georgia; that after the taking of Jerusalem by Vespasian, Jewish fugitives came from there to Mtzkheta and established themselves with their compatriots who had settled there formerly. Among the fugitives was the son of Barabbas. For an account of Urbnissi, Uplistzikhe and of Gori—a town whose foundation dates only from the eleventh century—see *Sbor. Mat.* I, Part I, pp. 59–108; Javakhishvili, *Gorod Gori*; also XXXIV, i, pp. 163–200, M. G. Janashvili, *Gori i ego okrestnosti*.

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seventh century B.C., but it is possible, as in the case of Nakalakevi that the cities of Tubal and Meshech were founded on or near the sites of earlier settled centres dating to the Bronze Age. Kartli or Armazi, its later name when it had become the shrine of the Magian cult, was known to the Romans as Harmozika, while Mtzkheta is the Mestika of Pliny and—apparently—the Seusamora of Strabo.[1] Mtzkheta seems to have replaced Armazi as the capital some time during the first century A.D., possibly in view of its greater strategic convenience, opposite the Daryal Pass, during the war with the Alans. Kartli-Armazi was, according to Wakhushti, finally ruined by the Arabs in the seventh century A.D. Place-names in the immediate neighbourhood of the site still seem to retain some fragmentary memory of departed grandeur; to the west, across the Kartlis-khevi, are the ruins of Tzikhédidi—"the great castle"; to the east is a spot called Nakulbakevi—"where there was once a bazaar".

Mtzkheta, eventually, was replaced by Tiflis—Georgian Tpilisi.[2] Tiflis, if it existed at all during the Classic period, can have been only a small village. Tiflis first received some importance during the fourth century when a Persian military governor with a view to maintaining surveillance over the Iberian king in Mtzkheta, built a fortress—*Kalah*—on the famous hill of Tiflis. In the following century, according to tradition, that somewhat shadowy paladin of the Georgian Annals, King Wakhtang Gurgaslani abandoned Mtzkheta and established his capital in Tiflis. Certainly at the beginning of the sixth century Tiflis had become a walled city and the seat of the Iberian dynasty—at that time a cadet branch of the Persian Sasanids. The original foundation of the Cathedral of Sioni dates from the same century. At the time of the Arab conquest in the seventh century, Tiflis was a very thriving place and with Barda'a and Derbend it remained for three centuries a stronghold of Mussulman power and a

[1] Strabo, XI, iii. "They have on their banks strong cities, set upon rocks, at the distance from each other of about 18 stadia, as Harmozica on the Cyrus, and on the other (Aragus) Seusamora." Hamilton, entirely at random, identifies Harmozika as Akhaltzikhé, but his identifications of Caucasian place-names are worthless. It is of course Armazi. Dubois identifies Seusamora as Samtavro (the place of the *Mtavari*), but Strabo's distance, a little over two miles from Armazi, leaves little doubt in my mind that his Seusamora was Mtzkheta.

[2] For the history of Tiflis see D. Bakradze and N. Berzenov, *Tiflis v'istoricheskom i etnograficheskom otnoshenijakh*, Spb, 1870. Bakradze, a competent archæologist, states that the Arabs built an observatory in the Kalah of Tiflis. Both Chardin (end of seventeenth century) and Pitton de Tournefort (beginning eighteenth century) give interesting descriptions of Tiflis. Of later European travellers Dubois de Montpéreux (Vols. II and III) is the best. For a scientific summary of the historical topography see the excellent and learned article by V. Minorski in *E.I.*

172 centre of the flourishing trade which grew up under the realist government of the Arabs.

133 In the uplands of the middle Caucasus, eastward of the Daryal gorge, two rivers find their sources—the Yori and the Alazani. They run with the same direction as the Aragvi, and when the latter falls to the Mtkvari, these partner rivers take still the same direction, running parallel with the greater stream, until after a course of some two hundred and fifty miles, the two of them curl round to join the Mtkvari, first the Yori and then the Alazani entering it at points about two miles apart. The country of these two tributaries form two long sleeve-like valleys, converging gradually to the south-east. The upper part where the rivers take their source is high alpine country, the immemorial settlement of crude clans of Georgian mountaineers—the Khevsurs, who border on the Ossetians, the Pshavs and Tushes, who beyond the watershed have for neighbours to the north the Chechens, a forest-folk, and to eastward the highland-tribes of Daghestan. These Georgian clans from antique times were subject to the Georgian kings, who, in the first centuries of the Iberian kingdom, were making expeditions against the Phkhoels or Pshavs.

Lower, where the Aragvi, the Yori and the Alazani run through wide and gently sloping valleys, flanked by wooded bluffs, is the old settled land of Kakheti, rectangular between high Caucasus, the bleak escarpment of Daghestan and the Mtkvari—broad about one hundred miles and long close on two hundred. It is a fertile land, but wilder than Imereti and Kartli. It is mostly wooded and, above all, oaks abound. Pigs are more plentiful than in any part of the Caucasus; sheep and buffaloes particularly grow strong and plentiful.

157 The people, as in all the serried valleys of the Caucasus, have their own character—and differ somewhat from the other Georgians. Strong they are and lithe, their limbs well hung, with daring eyes, alert, keen, animal. Proud they are and arrogant, great talkers, lovers of compliment, makers of faction; reckless and loyal they are ever without reason, with gallant laughter, honourable without thought, faithful and generous; these peasants are great noblemen.

174 In early history the country of Kakheti was divided into three; between the Yori and the Daghestan mountains was Kakheti, which in the eighteenth century still retained the name particularly as Inner Kakheti; the land between the Yori and the Mtkvari was Kukheti and the lower region, above the confluence of the three rivers was Hereti. According to